

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-14

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 OMB-01 SAJ-01 NEA-14

ACDA-19 AF-10 DRC-01 /142 W
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O R 291327Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2816

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 08453

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y PARA 2 LINE 31

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW

SUBJECT: PROFILE OF NEW FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER JEAN
SAUVAGNARGUES

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1. THE DEPARTMENT AND AMEMBASSY PARIS MAY BE INTERES-

TED IN MY IMPRESSIONS OF THE NEW FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER, JEAN SAUVAGNARGUES, BASED ON TWO YEARS OF ASSOCIATION WITH HIM AS A COLLEAGUE IN BONN AND EARLIER PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS DATING BACK NEARLY 25 YEARS WHEN HE WAS A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL. AS A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH, FRENCH AND U.S. TRIUMVIRATE RESPONSIBLE FOR BERLIN AND ALL-GERMAN MATTERS, SAUVAGNARGUES' CONTACTS WITH US HAVE BEEN FREQUENT AND CLOSE; HE WAS, OF COURSE, ONE OF THE WESTERN NEGOTIATORS OF THE FOUR-POWER AGREEMENT ON BERLIN.

2. THE EARLY CAREER OF SAUVAGNARGUES, WHO IS 59 YEARS OLD, FOLLOWED THE PRESCRIBED FRENCH MODEL, INCLUDING ATTENDANCE AT THE ECOLE NATIONALE SUPERIEURE WHERE HE MAJORED IN GERMAN AND POLITICAL SCIENCE. HE ENTERED THE FRENCH FOREIGN SERVICE IN 1941, BUT LATER JOINED DE GAULLE TO FIGHT WITH HIM IN NORTH AFRICA. RETURNING TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IN THE EARLY POST-WAR PERIOD, FOR SOME TEN YEARS HE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MAJOR FRANCO-GERMAN AND INTRA-EUROPEAN NEGOTIATIONS. HE HAS TOLD ME SEVERAL TIMES HOW, DURING THE LAST DAYS BEFORE THE DEFEAT OF THE TREATY ESTABLISHING THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE COMMUNITY BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 1954, AS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE TREATY, HE CLASHED WITH THE THEN PRIME MINISTER MENDES-FRANCE. HE WAS ALSO ACTIVE IN NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING FRANCE, THE U.S. AND THE U.K. IN THE POST-WAR GERMAN SETTLEMENTS, INCLUDING THOSE TERMINATING THE OCCUPATION OF THE COUNTRY IN 1949; GERMAN MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE COMMUNITY, AND THE PARIS AGREEMENTS LEADING TO THE ADMISSION OF GERMANY INTO NATO IN 1955. DURING THIS PERIOD, HE ACQUIRED THE REPUTATION AS SOMEWHAT OF A WONDER CHILD, ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST AND MOST TALENTED MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH DIPLOMATIC SERVICE, OBVIOUSLY DESTINED TO REACH HIGH POSITION. AT 39, HE BECAME FRANCE'S YOUNGEST MINISTER IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE. WITH THE RETURN TO POWER OF PRESIDENT DE GAULLE IN 1958, HOWEVER, HIS CAREER TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE, (HE HAD BROKEN WITH GAULLISM AT AN EARLY POST-WAR STAGE) AND HE EVENTUALLY ENDED UP IN WHAT HE FRANKLY

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ADMITS WAS HIGH-LEVEL EXILE TO AFRICA WHERE HE SERVED AS AMBASSADOR FOR ELEVEN YEARS IN ETHIOPIA AND TUNISIA, BROKEN BY SOME YEARS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AS HEAD OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS. HE WAS COMPLETELY

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O R 291327Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2817

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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REMOVED FROM THE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS WITH WHICH HE HAD
BEEN SO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED. HIS ASSIGNMENT TO BONN IN
MAY, 1970 BECAME POSSIBLE ONLY WITH THE DEPARTURE OF
DE GAULLE FROM THE PRESIDENCY.

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3. DURING HIS FOUR YEARS IN BONN, SAUVAGNARGUES WAS A HARD WORKING AMBASSADOR WHO SERVED HIS GOVERNMENT FAITHFULLY, BUT HE WAS CLEARLY NOT AN ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF THOSE POLICIES OF PRESIDENT POMPIDOU WHICH HE BELIEVED RAN COUNTER TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF EUROPE AND OF EUROPEAN RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WHAT-EVER HIS PERSONAL STANDING WITH THE ELYSEE MIGHT HAVE BEEN, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HIS RECOMMENDATIONS CARRIED CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND HE WAS FREQUENTLY CONFIDENT THAT LINES HE PURSUED ON A PERSONAL BASIS IN BONN WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE ACCEPTED BY HIS GOVERNMENT.

4. IF I WERE TO DESCRIBE HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE U.S., I WOULD SAY THAT IT COMBINES A GENUINE FRIENDSHIP WITH A CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS CERTAIN AMERICAN POLICIES AND PRACTICES. HE IS NOT ONE OF THOSE PARANOID FRENCHMEN WHO SEES SINISTER MOTIVATION BEHIND INCREASED COCA-COLA SALES OR THE WEARING OF BLUE-JEANS BY FRENCH YOUTH, BUT HE WILL ARGUE THAT FRENCH CULTURE EMBODIES CERTAIN VALUES WHICH NEED TO BE PRESERVED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD. HE IS FULLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN EUROPE AND OF THE WORLD-WIDE ROLE OF AMERICAN POWER, ALTHOUGH HE HAS SOMETIME EXPRESSED DOUBTS AS TO OUR CAPACITY TO USE IT WISELY. I DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT, UNLESS FORCED BY HIS SUPERIORS, HE WOULD PRESS DISTINCTIVELY FRENCH VIEWS WITH RESPECT TO THE U.S. TO THE EXTREME POINTS REACHED BY HIS PREDECESSOR. DURING RECENT MONTHS, WE ARE INFORMED, HE SENT SEVERAL PERSONAL MESSAGES TO JOBERT URGING HIM TO MUTE HIS HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES. HE HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE EXTREMELY SUSPICIOUS, NONETHELESS, OF THE US-SOVIET BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, AND HAS BEEN OUTSPOKEN IN EXPRESSING THIS SUSPICION FROM TIME TO TIME.

5. AS A PERSON, SAUVAGNARGUES IS NOT PARTICULARLY WARM OR OUTGOING, AND CAN BE SUPERCILIOUS, EVEN ARROGANT, WHEN HE WANTS TO TURN IT ON. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE CAN BE A TRUE FRIEND, AND I HAVE SEEN HIM DEEPLY MOVED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. HE IS, OF
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COURSE, HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, WITH AN ABILITY TO ARTICULATE HIS THOUGHTS PRECISELY. SOME HAVE NOTED AN OCCASIONAL INCONSISTENCY IN POSITIONS WHICH HE

HAS TAKEN ON DIFFERENT OCCASIONS AND HE SOMETIMES
DOES SEEM TO BE CARRIED AWAY BY THE LOGIC OF HIS
BRIGHT IDEA OF THE MOMENT WITHOUT APPARENT AWARE-
NESS THAT HIS BEAUTIFULLY STATED POSITION IS IN-
CONSISTENT WITH THE ONE HE TOOK THE DAY BEFORE. THIS
TRAIT, I SHOULD JUDGE, IS NOT A MATTER OF CONSCIOUS
INTELLECTUAL DISHONESTY, BUT RATHER THAT OF A MAN
SOMETIMES OVERLY FASCINATED WITH THE PLAY OF WORDS.
AS A NEGOTIATOR, HE USUALLY STARTS OUT WITH A
FIXED VIEW AND MAY SOMETIMES APPEAR NOT TO HEAR MUCH
OF WHAT OTHERS AROUND HIM SAY IN REBUTTAL. BUT HE
ALSO HAS A PRAGMATIC STREAK, AND CAN WHEN NECESSARY
SHOW A DISPOSITION FOR COMPROMISE. HE CAN BE INGENIOUS

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IN THINKING UP FORMULATIONS TO SERVE AS A BASIS FOR
SUCH COMPROMISE.

6. I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HIS EARLY STRONG
SENTIMENTS IN FAVOR OF EUROPEAN UNITY HAVE C HANGED
SOMEWHAT IN THE FACE OF RECENT SETBACKS WHICH THE EEC
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HAS ENDURED, BUT IT MAY WELL BE THAT, UNDER HIS
GUIDANCE, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL TAKE A MORE POSI-
TIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS INTEGRATIVE STEPS BY THE COMMU-
NITY. HE IS LIKELY TO SHOW A CONTINUING STRONG
INTEREST IN BERLIN MATTERS, AND HIS VIEWS WITH REGARD
TO THE UNDESIRABILITY OF ANY ENHANCEMENT OF THE
FEDERAL PRESENCE IN THAT CITY AND THE NEED GENERALLY
TO AVOID STRAINS ON THE FOUR POWER AGREEMENT ON
BERLIN WILL PROBABLY BE A PROMINENT FEATURE OF FRENCH
POLICY TOWARDS THAT CITY. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT
SOME GERMANS IN THE FRG FOREIGN OFFICE CONSIDER THAT
HE HAS A FAIRLY HEAVY ANTI-GERMAN STREAK IN HIM, BUT
IF SO, HE HAS NOT LET IT WARP HIS JUDGMENTS. HIS
CRITICS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE HERE ARE LIKELY TO
QUALIFY IN THIS LIGHT CURRENT SPECULATION THAT HIS
APPOINTMENT REFLECTS THE NEW FRENCH LEADERSHIP'S
DESIRE FOR CLOSER BONN-PARIS TIES. IN ANY EVENT,
SAUVAGNARGUES IS QUITE PROUD OF HIS ATTAINMENTS AS A
GERMANIST, AND HIS EARLY LANGUAGE STUDIES PLUS MANY
YEARS OF USE HAVE MADE HIM HIGHLY PROFICIENT IN
GERMAN. HE IS ALSO FLUENT IN ENGLISH.

7. I SHOULD THINK THAT SAUVAGNARGUES HIMSELF IS SOME-
WHAT SURPRISED BY HIS APPOINTMENT. HOW HE CAME TO
GISCARD'S ATTENTION, I DO NOT KNOW. HE HAS NEVER
INDICATED ANY PREVIOUS CLOSE CONNECTION. AS FOREIGN
MINISTER, HE WILL MAKE A SOMETIMES INTERESTING, SOME-
TIMES HELPFUL, AND SOMETIMES EXASPERATING INTERLOCUTOR.

8. MADAME SAUVAGNARGUES IS A HANDSOME, WELL-GROOMED
FRENCH LADY, AND A PRACTICING CATHOLIC. SHE HAS NOT
FOUND BONN THE MOST FASCINATING CAPITAL IN THE WORLD
BUT HAS DONE HER DUTY HERE BETWEEN PERIODS OF

ABSENCE. SHE SPEAKS PRACTICALLY NO ENGLISH.
HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

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